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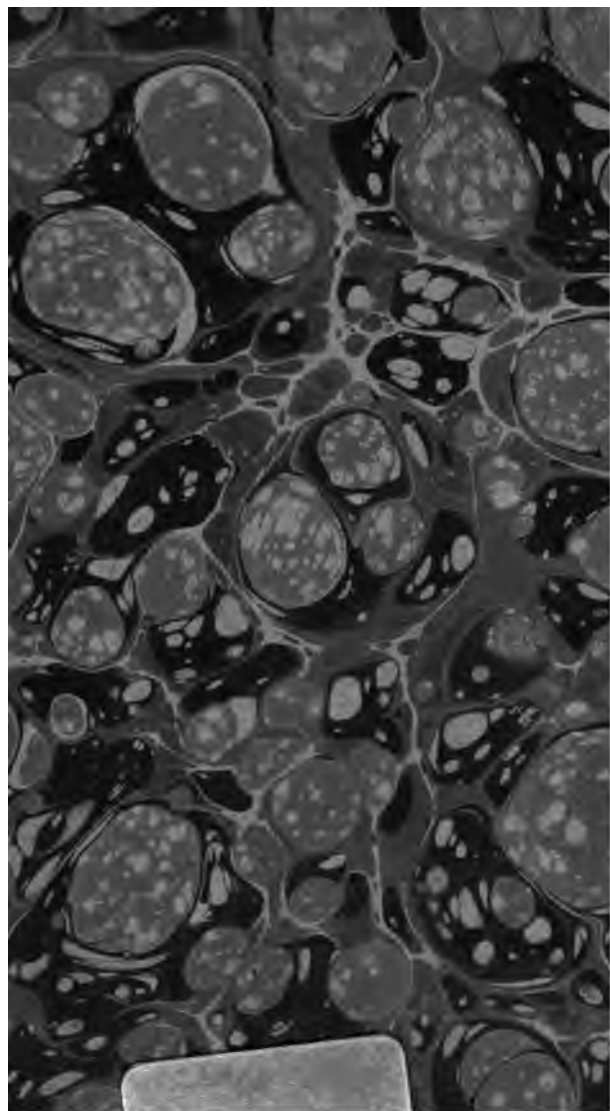
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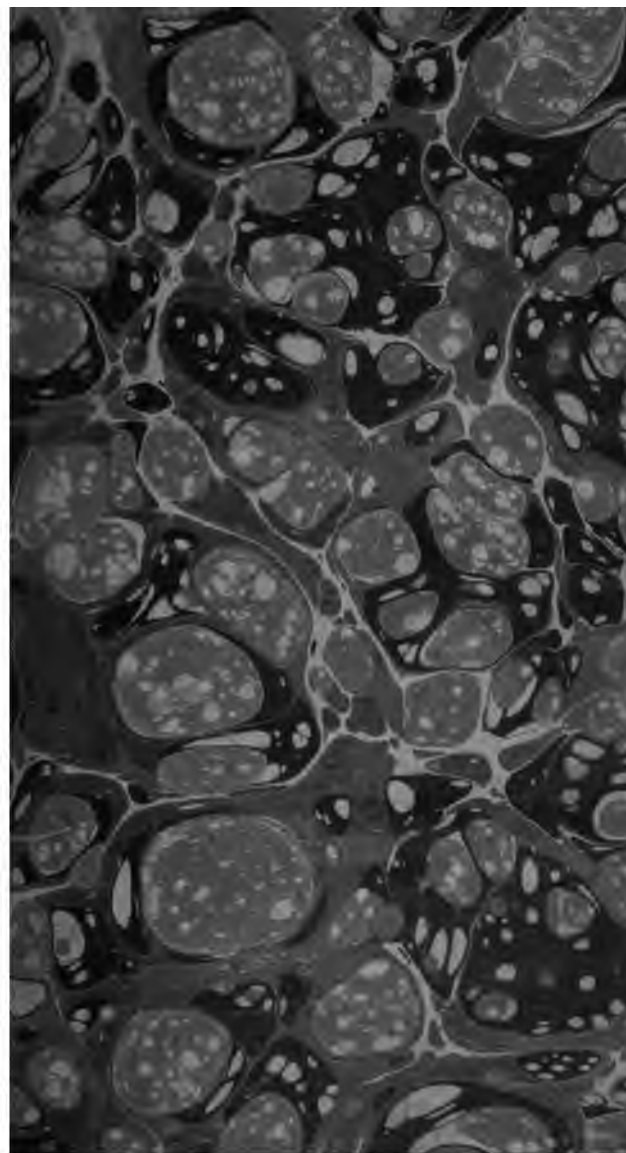
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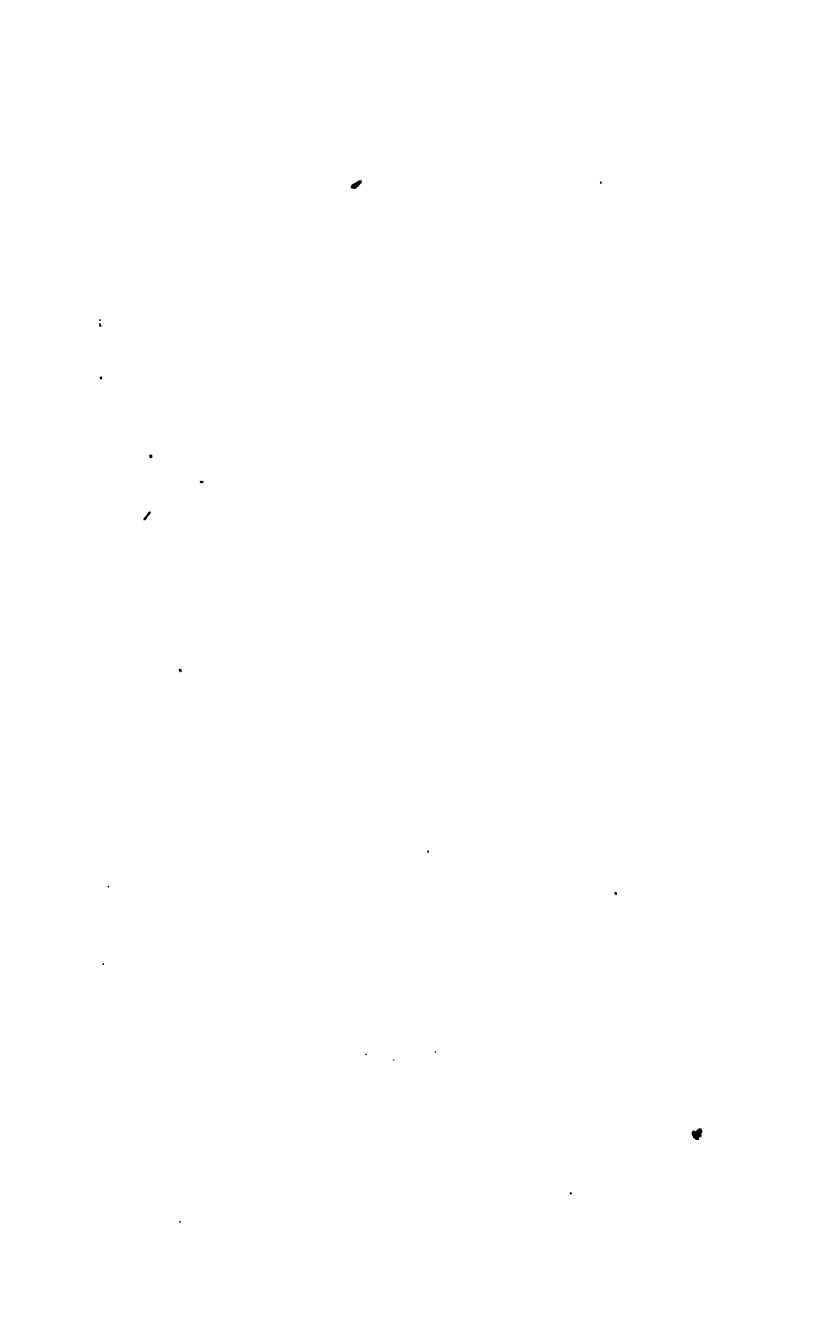
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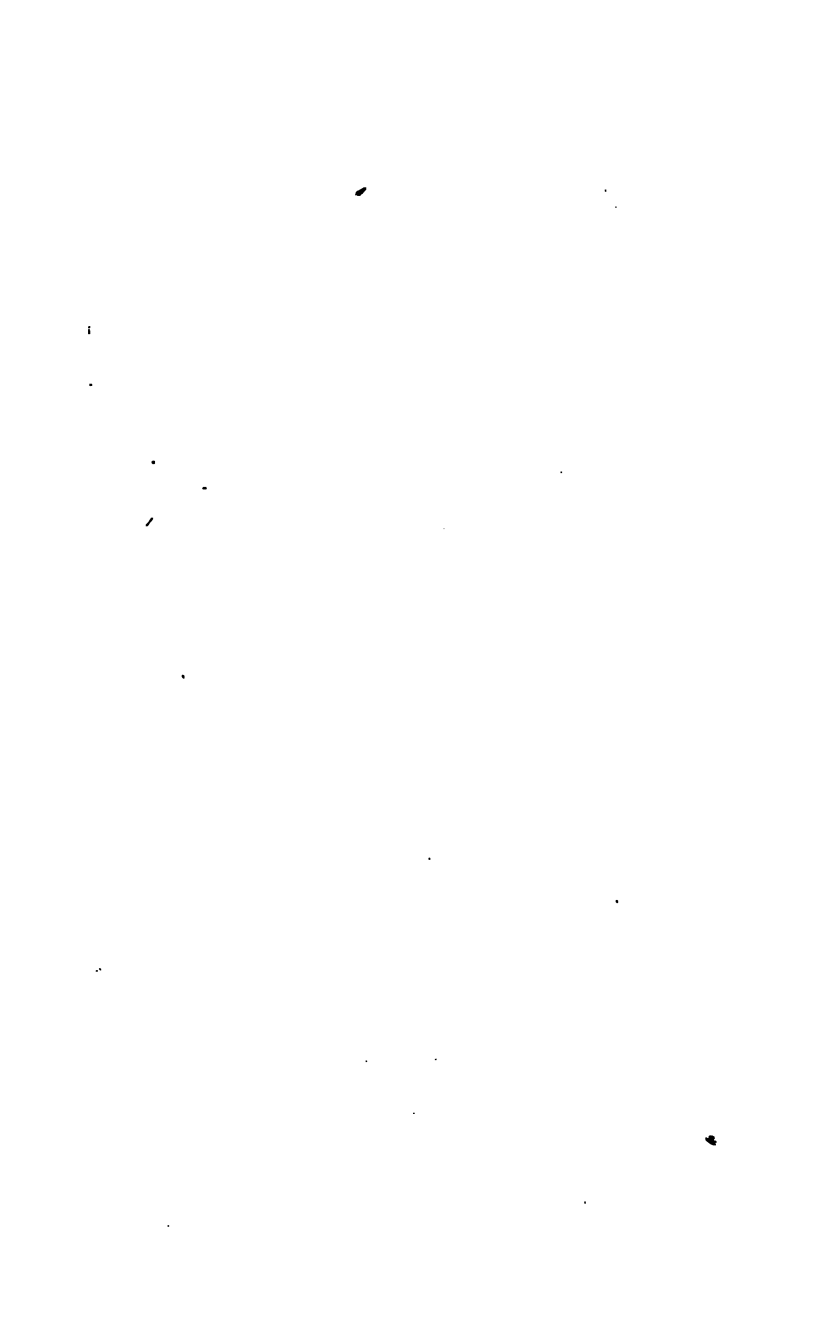




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THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S
AFFECTIONATE ADVICE
TO
A NEW MARRIED COUPLE.

BY THE
REV. JAMES BEAN, M. A.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

Domestic happiness! —————
Thou art the nurse of virtue.

COWPER:

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ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
FIFTH EDITION.



IT is now some years since the following Address, written at the suggestion of a friend, was first committed to the press. A new Edition being proposed, the Author considered it to be his duty to give the piece a careful revision ; that it might appear again with as few defects, as it was in his power to present it to the public. This obligation he has endeavoured to fulfil. The present Edition, however, will be found to differ from the

ADVERTISEMENT.

former ones in little more than this, that the Author has exchanged a few terms of severer import, for those milder forms of expression, which an increased acquaintance with himself, and the world around him, has taught him to consider as most likely to have effect; while they certainly best agree with the character here assumed, that of the Christian Minister.

Having apprized the Reader of these alterations, he has only to express his sincere wish, that this humble performance may accomplish the purpose it was intended to answer.

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AFFECTIONATE ADVICE.

CHAP. I.

The important Nature of the Marriage Union—The Married Pair exhorted not to grow remiss in the Attentions formerly paid to each other—A Hint on the Treatment of Relations.

AS the minister of a benevolent religion, it is not enough for me, to have joined your hands together at the altar. It becomes me to follow you from thence with my earnest prayers, that you may long enjoy together every comfort implied in the solemn

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benediction lately pronounced over you. Let me repeat that form of words which so well expresses the tender and affectionate concern I ought to feel for you : “ GOD the
“ Father, GOD the Son, GOD the Holy
“ Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you ;
“ the Lord mercifully with his favour look
“ upon you ; and so fill you with all spiri-
“ tual benediction and grace, that ye may
“ so live together in this life, that in the
“ world to come ye may have life everlasting ! Amen ! ”

To this truly Christian prayer, let me now add a few useful considerations, with respect to the relation into which you have entered.

It is an important relation ; the most so, of any you are capable of forming in this life. It is not your own happiness only, but that of others also, that may be affected

by an improper behaviour in this connection. It is a union constituted with a view, not merely to the reciprocal benefit of the two persons who agree to form it, but likewise to the manners and the happiness of society at large.

Smaller communities are the nurseries of larger ones. At a certain time of life, a transplantation is made; and the larger field of society takes its character from those qualities which were brought into it from the little enclosures of family life; you, are therefore not to consider yourselves merely as two friends who have agreed to share each other's trials or enjoyments; but as the founders of a little community of rational and immortal creatures, who may hereafter found other small communities, and from whom in process of time a *multitude* may spring. To this multitude, stationed here and there according to the allot-

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ments of divine Providence, you may give a cast of character, the influence of which may be matter of pleasure or of pain, both to themselves and those with whom they are connected, long after you have ceased to act in the present scene. And does it not deserve, even on this happy occasion, at least one moment's reflection, that though you may never move far from the spot on which these observations are addressed to you; yea, and ere long be forgotten even in this little circle; yet that the effect of what you may be doing here, the good or evil influence of your conduct on this circumscribed spot, may take such a range, as to be felt where the name of even your country is scarcely known?

But even this, though a large view of the possible extent of your influence, is comparatively but a confined one. It may be felt to eternity. The members of your

family are *Immortals*. Such also will be their successors. They will not only have a place in society, but an account to render to God. Before him they must appear, at the great audit of the world, *to receive according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad**; and to you they may be in some measure indebted, for the terror, or the transport, they may feel at that solemnity.

From these considerations, see the *importance* of your new connection, and accept of that advice, which your minister feels it his duty to address to you. He means not to throw a gloom over that joyful scene which now surrounds you. Long may it continue such! and he will partake of those felicities, of which you are the principal.

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

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receivers, by the pleasure with which he will contemplate them. He is conscious of the best intentions, in suggesting ideas which may infuse into your minds a salutary seriousness. He believes, that you will be gainers by listening to those who admonish, as well as to those who congratulate you on this occasion.

If, however, you are not at present disposed to contemplate your new situation in that very solemn light in which it has been represented; some good advice may be grounded on such a view of it, as is more congenial to the present state of your feelings toward each other.

I will therefore consider you as *fellow travellers* on the road of life; not brought together by accident, or as those who have consented to keep together on the journey

merely from a regard to convenience ; but from a cordial esteem of each other, heightened by a tender attachment, which has led you to make choice of each other as companions, independent of a view to the conveniences of travelling in company. You have given yourselves up to each other ; and have in the presence of God pledged yourselves, to bear each other's burdens, to consult each other's peace of mind, and to concur invariably in endeavouring to render the journey as pleasant to each other as possible. Thus conjoined, you have committed a trust to each other. Neither of you have now your felicity in your own hands. Neither of you have it in your power to be completely happy, without the consent of the other. Never may you repent of this surrender ! Let me however observe, that a knowledge of the imperfection of human nature makes me anxious

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for you ; lest you, who in the first stage of the journey are rendering the way delightful, by the interchange of every endearment which tenderness can suggest, should sink into the condition of those miserable creatures, to whom the greatest infelicity of the journey is, that they are obliged to travel together. It is not because I perceive any thing in either of you which seems to presage this melancholy change in your situation, that I now see it necessary to guard you against it ; but merely because you are *human*. You are partakers of a nature, the propensities of which, if not corrected by proper remedies, tend to rob us of every enjoyment.

To avoid the evils into which the infirmities of our nature may plunge us, we should enter *betimes* on the use of preventives.

With this view, the first thing to which I exhort you, is an attention to the preservation of that affection for each other, which first determined you to be partners for life. In the continuance of this alone, you will find the sufferings of the present state considerably reduced. You are not so unacquainted with the general course of human life, as to expect to pass through the world without trials and difficulties. They are the common lot of humanity, and you cannot hope for an entire exemption from them. Rough roads, dark nights, and stormy days, are to be expected : but while your affections continue undiminished, you will in this circumstance, find a considerable alleviation of the difficulties with which you have to contend. The trials which occur by the way will be less felt, when they serve as occasions of proving afresh, the care and tenderness which the travellers have for each other.

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When I exhort you to attend to the preservation of that affection which first determined you to become partners for life, I am not to be understood as if I expected, that the fervour experienced at its commencement would continue. No: I would apprise you, that ere long *that* will abate. But though time and familiarity will assuredly carry off much of the first ardour; a true affection will receive improvement from time. Time will render it a more chastised, rational, and steady principle; if it be cultivated. If it be cultivated, I say; otherwise, there may be a transition from idolatry to disgust.

To cultivate this kind of affection, neither of you should be remiss in those attentions which you have been accustomed to pay to each other. Let not the husband grow negligent of any of those marks of regard, by which a wife feels herself acknowledged

preeminently a friend and companion. She perceives herself *still* distinguished, when all the esteem, compassion, or good manners, which her partner is ready to express to others, is with a promptitude evidently unstudied, still more cordially shown to her. Conjugal affection is a delicate plant. It cannot thrive under indifference. Sullen taciturnity checks its growth. But it dies, when scarcely any time is spent at home; when every body can interest the husband in conversation but the wife; when she is the last person thought of in a recreation, or the least considered in an accommodation. None but an idiot can support that sort of treatment, by which a wife sees herself rated merely as a kind of domestic animal.

Let not, however, the wife be too ready to consider the behaviour of her husband, as expressive of indifference. Such conclusions often originate in the folly, pride,

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or petulance of the observer. To prevent our drawing them too hastily, let it be considered, that as an object becomes familiar to us, our esteem of it, though not diminished, naturally becomes a more silent sentiment. A woman must guard against the tormenting disappointments, to which childish expectations render her liable. For there is a childishness in her expecting always to be fondled; and if she do not become more rational in her expectations, this folly will occasion its own punishment: She will fancy there is a disgust taken at her; she will complain; and her complaints will produce it.

There should likewise be some allowance made for what is natural to men, and especially Englishmen; namely, a certain bluntness, through which they seem to be indifferent, when they are not really so. What may seem to improper judges, inat-

tention to others, to more penetrating observers, is manifestly nothing but an honest inattention to themselves; a superiority to the mean arts of those interested creatures, whose chief study is the cultivation of an insinuating address.

But should there appear at times something more than mere inattention; something that evidences a disturbance of temper; she is then perhaps called to allow for the agitations of mind to which *men* are particularly liable, from their having more to do with the world than women have. It is a serene region in which a woman moves; not so, that into which the head of a family is often driven for the support of those who depend on him. In the midst of a thousand vexations from the stupidity, negligence, or knavery of those with whom his business lies, has he to earn that bread, which his wife and children may eat in

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tranquillity. Should he, therefore, when he comes home from this turbulent scene, omit a customary mark of affection, eat his meal in silence, or return a short answer to a civil question; let not the wife consider such behaviour, as any proof of indifference to her. Let her not listen to that Dæmon of Discord who would prompt her to resent it as such. Let her recollect, that now is the time for her, to exert the peculiar virtues of her sex; to call forth all the sweetness, humanity, and tenderness of her nature; in order to sooth him who has been toiling all the day, principally, perhaps, with a view to her comfort.

In cautioning a wife not be too ready to consider herself neglected, I have not imparted the whole of my advice to her. I have admonished the husband, not to be negligent of those marks of regard which

are due to his partner; and she is to remember, that the same duty is incumbent on her. It will be impossible for affection to be preserved, if she tread in the steps of those inconsiderate persons, who, as soon as the marriage rites are celebrated, become remiss in certain engaging things, of which they before had been scrupulously observant. Must not she sink in the esteem of any understanding man, who by her conduct seems to say, "I have now obtained my settlement?" And nothing is more calculated to suggest such an idea, than a relaxation of former attentions. When a woman abandons herself to sloth and indulgence, when she degenerates from neatness to a disgusting negligence, from industry to indolence, from obligingness to selfishness;—when these omissions are continued in, without any necessary cause, after they have been gently remonstrated against, it is natural for a man of reflection to read

this sordid sentiment in his wife's bosom, and for a man of generosity to recoil at the discovery.

She who dreads the entertainment of such an opinion of her in the mind of her husband, must take care to let it have no support from her own conduct. She knows what is now pleasing to him, by remembering what was *formerly* so. And he knows how capable she is of giving him pleasure, by recollecting the methods she once took for this purpose, and that they are still practicable. If with the power still in her hands, she is remiss in the act, there is but one inference for him to make; namely, that it is a matter about which she is not so solicitous as she once was.

Here I am naturally led to notice a monstrous perversion of character, observed in some of the sex. I have seen a woman,

negligent of all the duties that are peculiar to her ; and yet, tormentingly busy in her husband's immediate province. If a woman would preserve the affections of her husband, let her not only be attentive to him in all the engaging actions which her sex, her situation in the family, and her vows, give him a right to expect from her ; but let her *confine* herself to these.

The disposal of his time, or his property, his journies, his connections, &c. are things to be regulated by the nature and circumstances of his calling in life : a subject which probably he best understands. I cannot but advise her, therefore, for her own sake as well as his, to leave these things entirely to his management ; and to remember, that it is her province to soften, to cheer, and to refresh that mind, on which the weightiest cares of a family press*.

* There are cases indeed, in which the inter-

The unfriendly tendency of such interference in women to the maintenance of mutual affection, is however not more manifest, than is that of a supercilious treatment of women. I refer to those ungracious creatures, who never honour the understanding, or contribute to the satisfaction of a wife. For though not to dictate in a husband's province, may she not be capable of advising? Many a man, wise in his own account, might have been saved from ruin, had he only deliberated with that prudent, thoughtful, and affectionate wife, to whose enquiries he would scarcely vouchsafe an answer; though introduced with all the graces by which a gentle and submissive spirit solicits attention.

ference of a wife, is not only justifiable, but highly commendable.—But it is perhaps unnecessary to suggest to the reader, that the intrusion on which the author animadverts, is that to which a woman is instigated by a forgetfulness of her proper character.

Far be this supercilious behaviour from him, to whom I address these precautions; and who has so lately solemnly pledged himself, not only to maintain, but to *honour* his wife. Rather let him deliberate with her, who ought to be his dearest, and who is his most disinterested friend; even in those affairs which it is his immediate duty to superintend. He may derive useful hints from a female mind in some particulars, though it may not (from want of practice) be comprehensive enough to grasp the whole of his system. And if not, yet he gratifies an innocent solicitude to know something of affairs, in which she is interested. At least, he prevents the mortification, which a sullen or contemptuous concealment occasions.

Such communications contribute very much to keep up the warmth of a rational

affection, as they honour the understanding of a woman; as they give her credit for taking an equal interest with her husband, in his cares, anxieties, and labours; and, above all, as in such deliberations, she feels herself treated as a friend. There is a way of conducting them, which draws after it nothing to regret. It will be for the happiness of both parties, that these communications be obviously the issues of a generous confidence; not the effect of uxorious weakness.

There is a circumstance in almost every matrimonial connection, which may have a considerable influence on the happiness of the married pair: There are *relations* on both sides. In properly managing the regard paid to these persons, the preservation of mutual affection is found in many cases very much to depend.

Here, some of the most humiliating instances have been exhibited of that selfishness, which cannot be satisfied with any thing short of the monopoly of affection. How unreasonable is it to expect, that love to me should extinguish affections which are due to those, whom duty, nature, and habit, require me *yet* to love! Our mind is perverted, if we do not perceive something additionally amiable in that married person; who, in the midst of new connections, cares, and occupations, still manifests, to a tender parent, the affectionate and reverential spirit of a dutiful child; or the still-existing union of souls, which interested a fond brother and sister in each other's happiness. If my affection be rational, it will be heightened by observing, that the object of my peculiar attachment appears amiable, in whatever relation I view this object. On the other hand, I am the subject of a sordid passion, if I can rest sa-

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tified with attentions paid to me, while I observe that the person thus devoted to me, is an unnatural creature to every one else.

Affection to our kindred, is not inconsistent with the fondest attachment of the heart to a husband or a wife. Do not therefore encourage that littleness and pride, which would lead you to think yourself defrauded of something that was your own, when you see any tender regard paid to them. It is a mean jealousy of temper, that makes us *prompt* to consider ourselves rivalled. It is a base pride, that leads us to put an invidious construction on those signs of respect and esteem which are shown to others. Let married persons guard against such a cause of unhappiness to themselves; by considering, that the distribution of affection does not necessarily diminish its quantity; but that it is even capable of in-

creasing, as the objects on which it is exercised multiply. Conjugal affection can indeed be shared only by two persons : but this may grow and strengthen, without any loss sustained to it from the cultivation of filial, or fraternal affection.

While the bonds of matrimony must not be suffered to dissolve those of filial piety, it may be as well, however, to suggest this hint to married persons : Let them avoid, as far as is consistent with duty to relations, that kind of *manner* in their treatment of them, which is calculated to awaken jealousy in the married partner. Through an indiscreet neglect of this rule of prudence, the visit of a relation has sometimes been the epocha of misery to a couple, who had hitherto lived in harmony. Cannot we be glad to see a parent, a sister, or a brother, without reducing a wife or a husband to a

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cypher in the house, during their stay in it ? Is it prudent to be so profuse in the expressions of our regard for them, as to lead the partner of our life, to have an interest in their departure ?

These admonitions on the article of attentions, seemed to me deserving of your regard. To enforce rules of conduct may indeed be thought to imply, that there are certain evils incident to people in married life, which it requires constant efforts to escape ; and this may seem to militate against the doctrine, that matrimony was instituted with a view to the happiness of human creatures. That it was instituted for this purpose, there can be no reasonable doubt. But it is not necessary to the fulfilment of this intention, that happiness should spring up spontaneously to those who enter into the state of wedlock. It deserves our thank-

fulness to Him who ordained this union, that it will fully answer its intention, to those who will be at the pains of guarding against whatever may defeat that intention.

By this sober view, I wish you to adjust your hopes. Do not entertain visionary expectations of bliss, which the circumstances of the world, and the imbecility of your nature, will render it impossible to realize. You must lay your account in the expectation, not only of meeting with untoward circumstances in the world, but likewise, in the expectation of discovering faults in each other. Neither the scene, nor the actors, will in the sequel be found to answer the ideas you may form of them, from the imposing style of congratulation. The scene you cannot alter; it will be managed by a superior power: but you may accommodate yourselves to it. And this is incumbent on you, not only in the relation you

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both sustain to the great Disposer; but with respect to the obligations you are under to support one another comfortably, in the various changes of situation through which you may have to pass.

Among other things which should be your care in this view, is the cultivation of *good temper*. But this is of such importance to you, that it seems necessary to appropriate a separate Chapter to the consideration of so essential a point,

CHAP. II.

On the Necessity of attending to the Cultivation of Good Temper.

OF the subject of this chapter it may be said, that without it, you can neither enjoy a pleasing situation, nor support an inconvenient one. Without good-nature, there may be many valuable qualities; but they will be all gladly exchanged (if it be possible to make the transfer) for that sweetness of disposition which compensates for a thousand defects. With this engaging quality, the attentions which have been recommended will be so far from being impracticable, that they will be as it were spontaneously produced; or if there be an

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occasional failure, the omission will be kindly intepreted. It will be attributed to want of thought, rather than to any thing of a more reprehensible nature.

The improvement of our temper is a thing not so much out of our power, as is commonly supposed. The general idea is that good temper is a certain gift of nature, like beauty ; which a man cannot have, unless he is born with it. It must be confessed, that some seem formed from their very birth to be the delight of human kind in this respect ; and that others again, seem to have brought into the world with them an unhappiness of temper, which seems incapable of amelioration. The generality of mankind however, are not found in these extremes. The tempers of most people are made up of a mixture of good and bad ; and it is frequently seen, that where these were once in an equal proportion, in a course of time, one

of these qualities predominates. The character of the person in point of temper, is denominated accordingly ; namely, from that quality which has the ascendancy.

The predominance of condemnable tempers, is not to be charged wholly to the circumstances that excite them ; but, in part, to the not imposing on ourselves that discipline, which has a tendency to counteract the influence of those circumstances which tend to deprave the temper. That the good in our temper may prevail, is unquestionably a most desirable thing ; and this desirable thing, is attainable. Now, if Interest may be allowed to second the voice of Duty, hear what it says to the wedded pair : ‘ if you
 ‘ wish to render your union delightful in all
 ‘ situations, and to relish it to the very last
 ‘ of its continuance ; seek the improvement
 ‘ of your tempers, at any price.’

On the cultivation of this necessary ingredient in domestic comfort, good-nature, let me suggest a few hints :

Endeavour to ascertain what is that particular defect of temper, into which you are most liable to fall ; and make a point of setting a strong guard over yourself, in that particular. Let this idea be ever present to your mind : ‘ At that weak part of my nature, all the miseries of matrimonial life may enter.’ This will probably be found an hard service ; but the necessity of the case obliges you to it. You have the choice of but two things : You must be incessantly vigilant and self-denying here ; or suffer every domestic delight to be torn from you.

But I have another piece of advice to give, which is easier to practise ; and by attending to which, you may save yourself,

some of the severities to which the preceding admonition calls you. Avoid the *occasions* which excite any unruly temper to which you may be particularly liable. This is a piece of advice given to you both, with respect to each other. Having ascertained each other's particular imperfection, you have likewise learnt what things they are, that call it forth: That which provokes your partner must, as far as possible, be shunned*.

Here a number of *little things* become objects deserving attention. Nor must they be passed over because they are little. Little things are felt to have great power, when they act upon a tender part. An insect could have blinded Sampson, when

* The author has expressed himself with this limitation, because it sometimes happens that what is objected to, is a duty which God has expressly enjoined.

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in his full strength. No small portion of the uneasinesses that have embittered married life, has arisen out of the insect-occurrences, which every day produces ; and contemptible as they are in themselves, they must be watched, on account of the mischiefs of which they are capable.

There is no evil which petty occurrences more frequently generate, than *disputes* ; nor are there many things, which it is more the interest of the married pair to guard against. “ The contentions of a wife,” saith Solomon, “ are a continual dropping.” Drop after drop wears a deeper impression than a thousand storms. What therefore is that unthinking woman about, who indulges a litigious spirit on every occasion ; who will debate *every* point ; and have the last word about straws ? She is forcing her husband into a society, to which, perhaps, he has had many objections ; all of which

however are at length overcome, by the refuge it affords him from the misery of incessant debate. It is not, perhaps, so much to the commission of the more alarming crimes, as to the frequency of frivolous disputes, that the alienation of married people from each other, is to be generally ascribed. I may add, that in these irritating encounters, deeds of the worst kind have often had their beginning. Whatever, therefore, you forget beside, let me conjure both of you to remember the mischiefs of frivolous litigation.

After all your care, perhaps, some occasional effects of your respective weaknesses will occur. Yet it is not a few eruptions of this sort, that will throw you back in the cultivation of good nature, if you can learn to make due allowance for *constitutional infirmity* in each other. Attend therefore to this plain lesson. It will have its ad-

vantage in suppressing an unhappy temper in many instances. Where there is a readiness to make this wise and humane allowance, the heart will be no more alienated by a little sally of temper, than by a fit of epilepsy. The paroxysm in either case, will call forth the compassion of the spectator.

Be it remembered here, however, that we must not be called upon too frequently for this allowance; and that it will hardly ever be granted, unless the *tenor* of life be such, as forbids a severe construction of an occasional failure. It is indeed the *tenor* of life that preserves, or destroys affection. It is not a few brilliant expressions of love, in the midst of a vast heap of unkindnesses, that will make us enjoy the marriage union: nor is it a few deviations from the line of duty that will render it unpleasant, while the general course of life is expressive of native goodness, and unquestionable affection.

Make a point therefore of disciplining your own temper: and be assured, that by so doing, the connection which you have formed will be more than tolerable; it will be pleasing. The recollection of it at some period distant from its commencement, will be grateful; notwithstanding, there may some things occur to you in this retrospect, which you will wish had been otherwise.

Let me entreat you to bestow all the pains on this endeavour which it may require. What equivalent can be found for good nature? Let the husband be sober and industrious; let the wife be chaste and frugal; by these virtues you may be preserved from some of the miseries which await on profligacy and extravagance; but while you escape these, what will your house be, without good-nature?—Not a home. By a *home*, we understand, a place in which

the mind can settle ; where it is too much at ease to be inclined to rove ; a refuge, to which we flee in the expectation of finding those calm pleasures, those soothing kindnesses, which are the emollients and the sweeteners of life.

All the admonitions, therefore, that I might detail on the article of temper, may be comprized in this short precept : *Endeavour to make your house a home to each other.* Absence from it will then be no gratification to either party. By the husband's attending to this precept, his return will be welcomed by those whom he left at home. It will not be expected with that sort of anxiety, which oppresses the family of an ill-tempered man ; fearful that some error unobserved by them should meet him at his entrance, and apprehensive that thereby his arrival will be announced to all the family by an explosion of passion. By the wife's

observance of this maxim, the husband will return with a pleasure equal to that with which he is received. "The heart of her husband will safely trust in her;" as the Wise Man speaks. Over the door of his house he will see written, "SACRED TO PEACE;" and thither, in the assurance of enjoying that repose and consolation he cannot find in the world, he will hasten from its toils and vexations.

CHAP. III.

*The Influence of Christian Piety on the
Happiness of married Life—The Conduct
which the Holy Scriptures require in
married Persons toward each other.*

THE observations which I now proceed to make, are of the utmost consequence. Were I to omit them, I should put into your hands a very imperfect directory for your conduct in that state of life, on which you have now entered. I have reserved the important subject now to be introduced, for the latter part of my address; for I wish, above all things, to leave the impression of this on your minds at our parting.

Whatever be our situation, there is one thing indispensably necessary to our enjoyment of the happiness it is in itself capable of yielding: we must endeavour to acquit ourselves as the servants of GOD in that situation. Thereby, we obtain his blessing, in it; without which, no condition can long be either safe, or comfortable. Let the situation be social, or commercial; let it promise little, or much; let the government of an empire, or only the care of a family, be committed to us, the observation holds equally true. The lot lies in this world; concerning which, God has said to mankind, "Thorns and briars shall it bring forth unto you." Piety however, has resources in a world lying under such a sentence. But without this, the fool and the wise will experience one common disappointment of their respective hopes.

I persuade myself, that you mean to adopt the rules I have suggested to you ; yet I must apprize you, that though I should not suspect your sincerity in declaring that you intended to put them in practice, I should not expect them to be long followed, if I doubted of your having the fear of God in your heart. One cannot much depend on those resolutions which have not a genuine piety for their principle.

Nor is there, if this be wanting, any good security for continued happiness ; even in those marriage-connections where the parties have joined their hands from the most sincere affection for each other. Without this, the sources of patience, resignation, forbearance, compassion, and candid allowance for natural infirmity, virtues for which there may be frequent and large demands, are small, and may be soon exhausted. Nor can it be expected, that we

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shall persevere in the more arduous parts of that kind of self-discipline which has been mentioned; if reverence for the will of God, and an earnest desire to please him in all things, are wanting. If therefore you have rushed into this connection, regardless of what is incumbent on you as immortal creatures, your business is, to correct this error at the beginning. Its influence will otherwise run through the whole web of life, and prevent many of those enjoyments which marriage was designed to bestow on mankind.

If, however, you are to be considered as persons of genuine religion, this circumstance is a most favourable omen of your future life. It is the smile of Heaven on the morning of your day. Every serious friend, taking an interest in the yet unfolded page of your history, rejoices in this good beginning; and expects, that it will be fol-

lowed by many grateful instances of the excellency of wedded life. The maintenance of mutual affection has been recommended to you, as a great object of the attention of a married couple. And what is so likely to keep up its vigour, as a deeply rooted regard to a religion, which cherishes all the tender-nesses of which our nature is capable? Such is christianity: a religion which exhibits the highest example of benevolence, and suggests the most powerful motives to its imitation. A mind imbued with the views and principles of this heavenly system, is formed to grace any lawful situation. But how amiable a figure must it make in the marriage connection, where there are so many opportunities of gratifying its philanthropic spirit!

Christian piety promises to keep the spirit of conjugal affection alive; by that

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sublime species of benevolence which it induces, an earnest desire for the spiritual and eternal welfare of all, but especially of those to whom we are more nearly allied. And it has likewise always at hand, a motive to the exercise of forgiveness; by that sense of *our own faults*, and our consequent need of forgiveness from God, with which it is ever accompanied.

Religion, while it thus calls forth and strengthens the mutual tenderness of the married pair, further provides for their continued happiness; by teaching them not to expect *too much* from each other; since neither of them has married an angel, but a human being: a creature “encompassed with infirmity.” This just view makes them sober in their expectations; and they are likely to continue longer, and more comfortably at the feast, than those who sit

down to it, ignorant of human nature, and therefore unprepared for the proofs of its imperfection.

Actuated by religious principle, the married pair will not have their happiness interrupted, by those altercations which are produced between the love of pleasure, and the necessity of resisting its continual and excessive demands. They will likewise be preserved from the embarrassments which in the end embitter this connection, where the parties have agreed in adopting an expensive style of living. In short, it is by these, and many other concomitants of genuine piety, that old age steals on, without bringing with it the misery of feeling, that there is nothing left but the dregs and feculence of worn-out enjoyments; something yet remains that can be tasted without exciting disgust.

Mistake me not, as if by piety, I meant merely the making a profession of religion; or the adoption of that system of truths, you hear from me your minister. There are people who go thus far, and yet afford as affecting instances of the unhappiness of married life as any. Christian piety must have, like many other things, its principles; and the more truth there be in the principles, the more purity and energy there is likely to be in the practice. But the mere adoption of opinions, however sound, is not christian piety. This is a thing that is manifested by making the word of GOD the rule of life.

A truly pious man makes the Holy Scriptures the rule, both of his expectations and his conduct. Making them the rule of his expectations, he embraces "the faith once delivered to the saints; whatever reception

it may have in that age in which he happens to live : making them the rule of his conduct, he consults them with respect to the several relations he may sustain in life, that " he may know how he ought to walk and " please GOD." GOD has given some very particular directions, how to conduct ourselves in relative life ; that in situations of such importance, the servant of GOD may not be at a loss how to act. The married person, for instance, has his behaviour marked out ; and these passages the man of piety will study.

The superficial religionist will not, indeed, be thus attentive to the preceptive part of scripture. It is lamentable to observe, how many there are who take up the volume of Inspiration merely as a book that discovers an expedient for escaping punishment ; never regarding it as the directory of conduct. If these are your models of piety, you will

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neither adorn, nor enjoy, the religion you profess. There is nothing to be expected from your religion, unless it be of that genuine kind, which will make each of you attentive, as in the sight of GOD, to your respective duties.

What I have therefore to recommend to you, is serious meditation, accompanied with prayer to GOD, on those passages of scripture, which teach you how to act in this relation. They were rehearsed to you when your nuptials were solemnized. And as part of an inspired book, you are to consider the exhortation in the office of matrimony, as GOD's charge to you from the altar.

“Husbands love your wives, even as
“Christ also loved the church; and gave
“himself for it, that he might sanctify and
“cleanse it with the washing of water, by

“ the word ; that he might present it to him-
 “ self a glorious church, not having spot
 “ or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it
 “ should be holy, and without blemish.
 “ So ought men to love their wives as
 “ their own bodies—Let every one so love
 “ his wife, even as himself *—Husbands
 “ love your wives, and *be not bitter against*
 “ *them* †—Ye husbands *give honour* unto
 “ the wife, as unto the weaker vessel ‡.”

Perhaps no part of scripture less requires
 a comment. To understand the meaning of
 familiar terms, is all that is necessary here.
 The Christian Husband is taught by this
 passage, that GOD requires him to love the
 woman he has chosen : to be kind and tender
 to her ; yea, to honour her ; and therefore,
 that the domestic tyrant, the fierce ani-

* Eph. v. 25—33.

† Col. iii. 19.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 7.

madverter on every little omission, the husband whose contemptuous treatment of a wife is an habitual degradation of her, are persons condemned by the Lord of all; who is to be considered as the Avenger of the wrongs of every deserving wife, thus injured. Here, husbands may learn, that something more is required of them than merely to afford a maintenance to a wife; and that they do not fulfil their obligations, even when they provide what is called a very comfortable one. Nothing can compensate for the want of that *love*, required in the passage above quoted. What is a maintenance, any further than it be enjoyed? and how impossible is this, unless it be accompanied with tenderness, kindness, and respectful treatment in words and actions. Alas! For want of these endearments, many a woman, who by her dress seems to tell the world, she has a husband that spares no expence to gratify her, is in all her finery

to be considered as a gaudy victim, ever bleeding under the hands of domestic cruelty. She is as little to be envied, as the devoted animal which stood at the altar, ornamented with a wreath of flowers.

All that the warmest advocate for women can enforce on husbands, being, as the passages above quoted show, expressly required by God himself; the next thing to be considered, is the *example* which the inspired writer has selected, for the model of a husband's behaviour towards his wedded partner. "Husbands love your wives, *even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing *.*"

* Eph. v. 33, &c.

Here is at once example and motive. What more could even an inspired man say, in order to form the husband to every thing affectionate, disinterested, sympathizing, and attentive to his wife, than this: “*Love her, as Christ loved the Church?*” He who understands christianity, finds a volume in such a sentence. His mind instantly recurs to that astonishing instance of benevolence which his Redeemer exhibited, in giving himself up to sufferings and death for our salvation; to that which he showed, in sending forth ministers to “preach the Gospel to every creature;” to the tender attention which he pays now he is in heaven to all who receive this Gospel; taking care that every thing be provided, which is necessary to increase their faith, purify their hearts, administer to their consolation, support them in their conflicts, and cherish the hope which he has formed in them of participating in the fulfilment of

those gracious purposes towards his Church, which are to be consummated in heaven, and enjoyed to all eternity. This, says he, is my *pattern*. Such a friend as Christ was to his Church, am I to be to my spouse. Am I a part of that body, of which he is such a Saviour? Then he gave himself for me. Let me imitate that affection, of the fruits of which, I humbly hope, I am a partaker. I here find myself required to love my wife, though she is not without fault; to interpose between her and danger; to supply, as far as is in my power, every thing which can contribute to her comfort; to seek not only her present, but everlasting happiness; for thus did Christ love his Church.

To the Wife, the word of GOD speaks thus: "Wives, *submit* yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even

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“ as Christ is the head of the Church,
“ Therefore, as the Church is *subject*
“ unto Christ, so let the wives be to their
“ own husbands, in every thing *.”—“ Let
“ the wife see to it that she reverence her
“ husband †.”

Here, we should particularly notice that virtue, on which the admonition principally turns; namely, submission. A virtue so prominently commended, ought certainly to be considered, as meriting particular attention.

It need not, surely, be necessary to observe, that the superiority which the scriptures give to the man over the woman, is not that of a master over a slave. The precepts enforced on the husband are of such a kind, as to show, that the superiority

* Eph. v. 22—24.

† Eph. v. 33.

with which he is invested, is founded in reason, and maintained by love. God has not required from the woman the submission of a slave; but a reasonable and advantageous submission: such as a man of good sense knows it becomes him to receive, and an affectionate wife will yield with pleasure. Some women, however, consider every thing of this kind, as the relinquishing of all self-defence. Mistaken creatures! It is their best security, as well as one of their loveliest ornaments*: like polished armour, it is both beauty and defence.

Considering the importance given to the virtue now under consideration, in the words of the Apostle above-quoted, we see at a glance, how far from that character which the Holy Scriptures commend

* 1 Pet. iii, 4

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to women, are those, who deny to a husband any rule in his house, unless he choose to purchase it at the expence of peace. Such a conduct is against not only the spirit, but the very letter of Christianity: "Let the wives be subject to their own husbands, in every thing *."

The Apostle, as if to prevent the possibility of a misunderstanding, enforces his point by a most striking illustration: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands, in every thing †."

* Ephes. v. 24.

† Eph. v. 22—24.

The Church is subject to Christ, to this extent. She is always to be known by these circumstances, that as her legislator, she receives laws from Christ; as her Lord, she receives commands from him; as her guide, she follows him. That religious society, therefore, which renounces the authority of Christ, pursues an interest separate from his, and sets up for its own directress in matters of faith and morals, is not the Church. Nor is any individual who may be thus characterised, to be considered as a part of the Church of Christ; "which is the blessed company of all faithful people*."

This model of subjection, unreserved subordination, and reverential deference, is a woman in the ties of wedlock to make

* Communion Office in the book of Common Prayer.

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her *exemplar*; if she would be found in that relation, such as God approves. Let her be frugal, industrious, cleanly, and chaste; she is to have the praise of all these good qualities; but let her remember, that if withal she is self-willed, and refractory, she is destitute of that virtue, in which the Holy Scriptures seem to have concentrated all the good qualities of a wife. Much as she may triumph in the contemplation of her superiority over the idle and extravagant, with whom she compares herself, she resists the order of God; and her resemblance is not the church, but the *world*. She acts as if she was determined to go as far as possible from the pattern which God has set before her, and had chosen one that is the very reverse of the Church. Such is the world; in all points, an affecting contrast to the spouse of Christ: rebelling against that government, to which his spouse most gladly yields her-

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self; despising that authority, which she loves to honour; and with equal ingratitude, and folly, rising up against the power, which both her obligations and her interest require her to obey.

Let the husband and the wife contemplate the two examples which an inspired Apostle has chosen for their respective imitation; and they will find, that all which has been said in the former part of this Address, and which has been enforced apparently from a regard to prudence only, is bound on them from more authoritative considerations: God himself requires it of them.

I designedly suppress any further comment on those portions of Holy Scripture which were read to you at your marriage, that I may recommend the text itself to your consideration. Make a point of sitting down to reflect on these, and other passages

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in the sacred writings, in which the duties of husband and wife are set forth. Perhaps if you made it a rule at the return of any particular day (your wedding day for instance) to peruse them, it might prevent you entirely overlooking what so much concerns the credit and the comfort of each other.

Let me request you both, to charge yourselves with this task. Attend to what God teaches you on the subject; and reject, with an honest indignation, those opposite sentiments, with which the gay and profligate part of mankind daily insult both God and man. To the same fate also, let those prejudices be consigned, which weakness and inconsideration traditionally adopt, and form into maxims of folly and mischief. I would have you not only *read* the passages of Scripture, but examine yourselves by them. Am I this kind of person, in this relation?

“Did I act in such a thing, agreeably to the spirit of these words?” Should any unpleasant circumstances in future arise, enquire whether they may or may not be attributed to your departure from the pattern set before you. In thus examining yourselves by the appointed rule of duty, you may discover what there is in your particular constitution to render the imitation of the pattern peculiarly difficult to you. Carry such difficulties to God: not to request him to relax his laws in consideration of them; but to obtain from him those extraordinary succours which you in particular may need, in order to act on all occasions worthy of your christian profession.

These are the marks of genuine religion; a divine principle, which I pray may daily acquire strength in you. In seeking the growth of vital piety, you will experience an increase of its attendant blessings. Rest

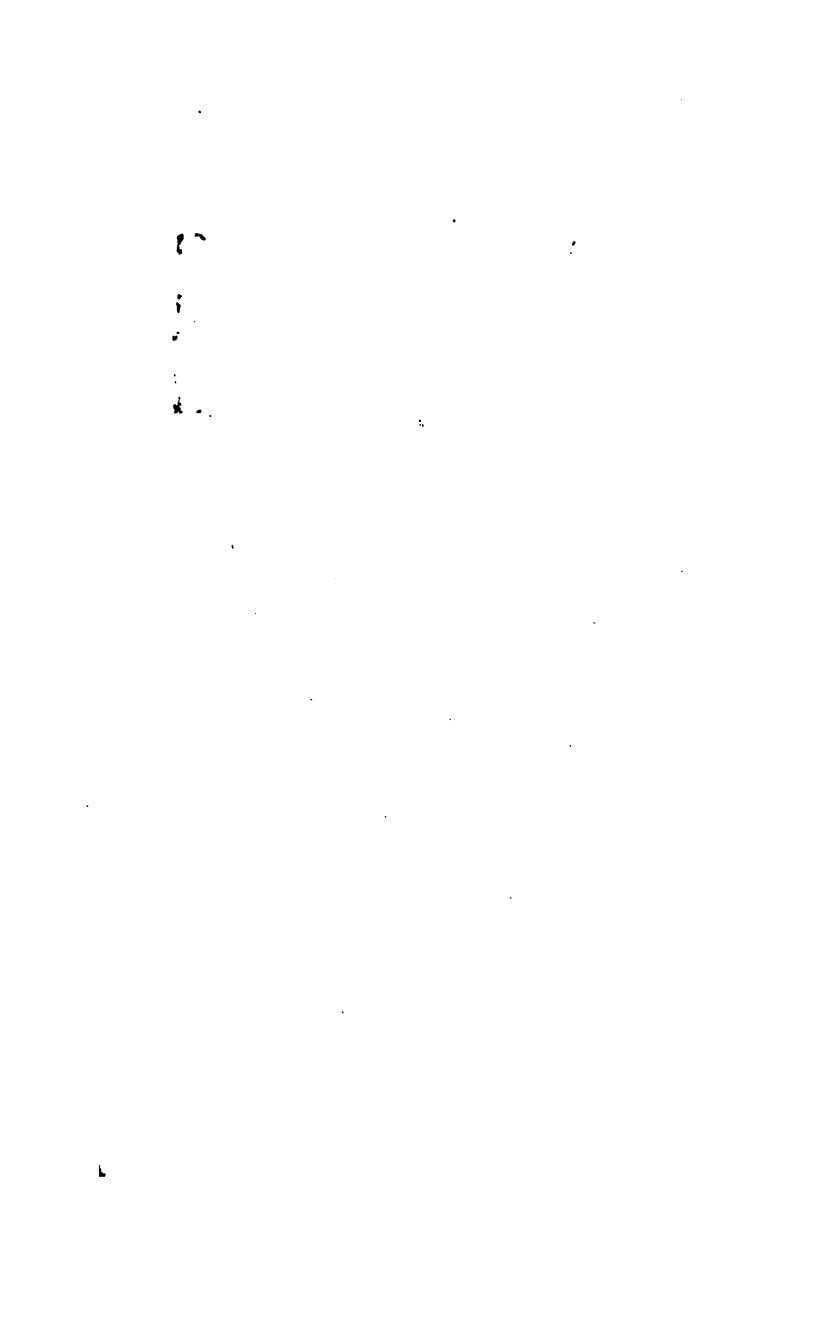
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not therefore in your present attainments ; but endeavour to acquire more and more of the character of a real disciple of Jesus Christ. Consider every discovery or attainment in the christian life which either of you make, as an addition to your common stock of imperishable good ; and partake of it together, as those who have no interest separate from each other in any thing. This is to live together “ as heirs of the grace of life *.” Let this “ growing in grace,” therefore, be a subject of frequent and earnest prayer to God for yourselves, and for each other ; that you may pass your days together, as both redeemed by the same Saviour, sanctified by the same Spirit, aiming at the same end, and hoping at last to meet in the same heaven. Thus instead of being snares to each other, the two frequent bane of fond alliances, you will proceed through

• 1 Pet. iii. 7.

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Life blessing, and being blest to each other ;
by administering tender admonitions, when
you see each other remiss ; encouragements,
when disheartened ; or consolations when
depressed.



CHAP. IV.

The Effects of Christian Piety in the married Pair with respect to their Household—On the Advantages of Order in a Family—The Family of Eusebius—The Unhappiness of an irreligious Couple.

I HAVE not forgotten what was hinted in the beginning of this Address: namely, that one consequence of your union, is the establishment of an household; and that hereby, a power is put into your hands of contributing something to the formation of public manners. I trust that you are not willing to overlook this circumstance.

There is, at least, one duty which the spirit of piety will dictate to you in this view

of things; viz. the *consecration of your house*, by the daily returns of family worship. Let there be an altar in your house, inscribed with the adorable name of your Creator. Here let the master be daily found, presenting, as the minister of God, the offerings of prayer and praise. The religious care of a family seems to be spoken of, as a certain effect of real piety, in that account which God gives of Abraham in Gen. xviii. 19. “ I know *him*, that
 “ he will command his children and his
 “ household after him, and they shall keep
 “ the way of the LORD, to do justice and
 “ judgment.”

By this acknowledgment of God, a married pair evidence their reverence of his being; they draw down his blessing on their family; they diffuse a spirit of seriousness through it; and probably, convey the seeds of piety into many other fa-

milies. What objects are these to the formers of a new household! and how careful should they be to unite their respective powers, in endeavouring to render that effectual, which has such happy tendencies! Let not only, therefore, the husband be ready to perform the duty in question: but the wife be his willing coadjutor in it. I have indeed doubted, whether there were this concurrence in some houses, where, however the duty was not omitted. I have seen the master waiting for that part of the family, which the mistress ought to have seen ready to attend him at the hour of prayer. Here is an impediment to family religion, proceeding from something defective in her, to whom the internal affairs of a family are principally committed. But I am obliged to confess, that the irregularity in question has not always been entirely the woman's fault. The master has in some measure

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been chargeable with it; by not fixing a certain hour, or in appointing an inconvenient one, for the performance of this important duty.

This and many other errors you will avoid, by digesting a *system of family government*, and determining to adhere to it. An expedient which you will find to be a source of numberless advantages; and much more necessary to personal and social happiness, than at first may be conceived. Assuredly, things will not proceed comfortably without it. Where there is order, there is silence, facility, and energy.

Among the points to which order should extend, there is none of greater importance than the proper distribution of time. Have a fixed hour for rising, for devotion, for meals. Let there be an appropriate portion of

time for every office, and for the labours, or recreations, of every member of your family.

How pleasing in this respect is the house of *Eusebius*! He has the happiness of having a partner, who in her province acts with him, in the maintenance of a well digested system of domestic government. There is an appointed hour for breakfast; after which (it being on the whole then most convenient) all assemble to pay their devout acknowledgments to GOD, for the mercies of the preceding night. After this, every one withdraws to his respective employment. Some of them appear no more, till the stated hour of Evening-worship arrives and gives all an opportunity of coming together again. This exhibition of order, which you are presented with in the morning, is but a specimen of what may be seen all through the day. On a Sunday, you

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perceive the like regularity. After breakfast, the family are assembled to prayers. They are enjoined to attend this service, in the same dress in which they are to appear in the House of GOD ; that the preparation of their persons may not be deferred to too late an hour, but that instead of spending the last minute at the glass, there may be a little time for reflection or private devotion, previous to their attendance on public worship. All being thus ready at a few minutes notice, they are easily collected, and they proceed as an united and regular family to church.

You perceive nothing like distraction in this house. Every one knows what he has to do ; he can estimate, by the punctuality which is observed, the length of the parts into which the day is divided, and can adjust his affairs accordingly. Nor is the *sound judgment* of the superintendants more con-

spicuous, than the *happiness* of the members of this family. Indeed, order is to be recommended, from its tendency to render every one comfortable. It was, perhaps, this excellency and happy tendency of order, exhibited on a large scale, that contributed very much to raise the Royal visitor of Solomon to that high pitch of admiration, in which she exclaimed, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand and hear thy wisdom continually." These words were the utterance of an admiration occasioned, among other things, by "seeing the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers *."

The hints which I have given to you, are the result of observation. Invention has not been strained in the fabrication of this

* 1 Kings i. 1—8.

Address. What it has cost me, consisted only in arranging a number of reflections, which what I had seen in married life had taught me to make. And give me leave to say, that in the whole course of my observation, there is nothing that has so frequently struck me as a cause of unhappiness to married-people, as the want of religion. This defect, nearly or remotely, produces most of the miseries of a state, which was designed for the happiness of the sexes. “Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause?”—Not merely the drunkard; but all who like him, place their happiness only in the indulgence of the senses. See that all your prospects of continued happiness are not clouded from such a cause.

The evil effects of disregarding God are seldom more shockingly exhibited, than in

the history of an irreligious couple. Here, where the greatest temporal enjoyments might be found, there are frequently experienced the most exquisite of human miseries. *The fear of God* being wanting, the union becomes a source of incessant woes. How can it be otherwise with creatures whose nature is depraved, and who, living without any acknowledgment of God, are under no superior influence to regulate their temper, and prevent the violence to which ungoverned passions are subject?

The whole house becomes a scene of disorder and wretchedness, where the principals are thus at opposition with God. No just sense of right and wrong appearing there, no lessons of duty being heard in it, no instances of reverence to a Divine Governor being seen, nor any thing like an acknowledgment of his authority being expressed; in every part of that house vice is

visible ; and the members, for a want of a common restraint, and common bond of union, become the tempters and punishers of each other. Offences are given ; and no principle existing that would lead them either to forgive injuries, or suppress resentment, vices and mutual offences are multiplied by each other, and the quantity of wretchedness increases to a dreadful amount. What wonder is it, then, to hear of dire distress in such a family ? Of horrid eruptions of inflamed minds, throwing out on all sides, bitter reproaches, diabolical imprecations, or destructive weapons ? These are the *visible* evils which haunt the abodes of irreligion.

But these are not all. Many of the evils proceeding from this cause are concealed from public eyes. But were all the griefs, the loathings, the hatreds, the remorse, the apprehensions which are experienced,

equally as conspicuous as the actions to which they give birth, we should not even then have a complete view of the case. We must follow the guilty pair into the eternal world, if we would ascertain all the effects of their impiety. We must hear their reproaches. We must be witnesses of their recriminations. We must see them, who once exchanged vows of eternal tenderness, transformed into beings of the most hostile dispositions towards each other; and meeting, only to augment their mutual misery by mutual accusations. This is the dreadful ultimatum, to which the history of an irreligious couple tends.

Mercy, however, sometimes interposes, to prevent this awful result of things. The offenders are commiserated, changed, and made happy. Light breaks in upon them, and they see at a glance, the source whence all their miseries are derived; namely, a

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disregard of GOD. They repent. They are forgiven. They are transformed; and are now no longer to be described "as hateful and hating one another *."

Thus reconciled to GOD, and to each other, it becomes the business of their lives to repair the mischiefs which their irreligion has occasioned in the family. Their house has been polluted; it must now be dedicated to GOD. There, he must not only be occasionally worshipped, but honoured at all times. Nothing contrary to his supreme will can any longer be permitted to continue there. Evils are not indeed so easily removed, as they are introduced: but their aim is right, and GOD is on their side: and when he favours a design, the greatest difficulties are overcome: "Valleys are exalted; mountains

* Titus iii. 3.

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**“ are levelled ; the crooked is made straight,
“ and the rough places are made plain *.”**
**Things thus renovated, Religion introduces
Peace, an heavenly guest ; and the social
endearments of a family, cemented by the
fear and love of GOD, are experienced.**

**The next chapter shall introduce to you
a religious pair, whose house afforded an ex-
emplification of this happiness.**

*** Isai. xl. 4.**



CHAP. V.

*Short Account of Evander and Theodosia
—How Christianity supports the Mem-
bers of a religious Family under afflictive
Events, exhibited in the Death of Theo-
dosia—Conclusion.*

EVANDER and *Theodosia* were both the offspring of pious parents. Their union was a natural one. It had all the qualities which accompany an attachment founded not merely on similarity of religious views: it was such an affection as they could neither suppress nor direct to another object. But though their attachment was not produced by their religion, it was nourished by it. Whatever they saw in each other's person or temper to unite their hearts, was heightened by the satisfaction they had in each other's

pect to produce *conviction* in the infant mind. Yet they conceived, that one way to prevent the introduction of evil, was to pre-occupy the mind with that which is good. And it never once came into their thoughts, that they should be blamed for enforcing a truth on children, because the disciples were too young to see that truth in as clear a light as their instructors did. They had none of the quirks and refinements of sceptics, in their method of education. They went to work in a straight-forward way; what they had learned, they taught: they trusted they knew "the way of salvation," and they endeavoured to lead their children in the same path.

Impressed with the infinite importance of this part of a parent's duty, they *took pains* in it. To conduct a business of such consequence, in a desultory way, was in

their opinion, but a smaller degree of that criminality which neglects it entirely. It therefore did not content them, to inculcate religious ideas; they aimed, in dependance on God, to induce moral habits. The *genuine Christian*, as distinguished, not more from "the children of this world," than from those equivocal religionists, who seem to belong neither to the church nor to the world, was the model they kept in their eye. To see this simple character in their children; to see them avowedly on the side of truth, yet free from all affectation; evidently desirous of living a useful life, yet neither vain nor obtrusive; was a hope they expected not to realize, without great pains taken on their part. They counted the cost, and determined to pay it. Hereby they hoped to obtain the Divine blessing upon their endeavours: For here they principally placed their hopes. This they constantly prayed for; fearing, from

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what they knew of the depravity of human nature, that without it, their labours might fail of success.

But this pious care was not confined to their children ; it extended to every member of their family. It began to operate silently at the very first sight of a new domestic. Aware of the sordid ignorance in respect to religion, prevalent in the families of the poorer class, and knowing that in their own house there were better opportunities of learning divine truths ; they seldom hired a servant without feeling an anxious wish, that that person might know something more of **God**, by coming among them, than he knew before. Through the desire which they habitually felt that this benevolent wish might be gratified, they would often waive that severe animadversion on a fault, to which a sudden attack on their tempers might urge them. They wished that a servant, for his

own sake, might be led to reflect, that religion rendered people not difficult to please, nor prompt to punish.

Thus honouring God, they were honoured by him. Their family was not a society of starched formalists, distinguished by some unnatural peculiarity of dress, or language; but while they looked like the members of other families, they lived differently. They were taught to reverence the word and ordinances of God. They were taught, that the blessing of God, and the favour of their common superiors, were to be expected in fulfilling the duties of their stations, and in the discharge of good offices toward each other. No mean parasite could thrive in this soil; for *favouritism* was conscientiously struck out of that system, which the heads of the family had adopted: every one knew, that impartial kindness was the law of the house.

Thus taught, they repaid their teachers, by practising the lessons in which they had been instructed. The house was the abode of regularity, industry, uprightness, and peace. It was not exempt, indeed, from human infirmities, (for my scene is not laid among disembodied spirits) yet it showed, to what a degree of excellence human nature, under proper management, may be brought; and it produced social gratifications, untasted, where the cultivation of religious principle is neglected. Nor was it easy to mistake the source, whence all the regularity and comfort of this abode proceeded; the genuine religion of Evander and Theodosia. Their authority, their instruction, and their example, accounted for all that distinguished this happy society.

They had the reward of seeing the fruit of their labours. That house, over which they ruled in the fear of God, was not

exempt from the ordinary visitations of Providence. Like other houses, it was subject to the incursion of death; and at length the event took place: but not accompanied with its usual horrors. The trial was softened by the manner in which it was met, both by those who departed, and those who were called to give them up: the former, being enabled to die rejoicing in the truths of that Gospel which had been inculcated in the family; and the latter, to find a relief under the painful stroke which separated one friend from the other, in the well-grounded hope of meeting again in a better world.

The person whom it pleased God, in his righteous dispensations, to take from this family, was one of its most important and most lovely members. It was Theodosia; the wife, the mother, the delightful companion of her husband, the nurse and instruc-

tress of his children, the discreet manager of his domestic affairs; whose unremitting attention banished confusion from the house, and whose sweetness of temper filled it with peace.

I need not detail every particular of her last illness; an account of the concluding circumstances will be sufficient for my purpose :

Her disease was of the lingering kind; a circumstance of peculiar advantage, for manifesting the influence of religion in death. Evander approached her bed side one morning, as usual, to enquire how she had passed the night; to whom she replied, in the following terms : “ I should be glad for your
“ sake, dear Evander, to be able to say, I
“ have had a better night than usual. I
“ know how such a report would gladden
“ your heart; but I am not able to give such
“ an account of myself. Indeed, I find

“ myself going apace, and I had determined
“ before I had the pleasure of seeing you
“ this morning, to endeavour, before my ill-
“ ness renders me any weaker, to gratify a
“ wish which I have almost through life in-
“ dulged. I have never felt much solici-
“ tude about the kind of death with which
“ I might finish my course : one thing only,
“ I have been desirous of ; which is, that I
“ might not leave the world, without being
“ able to make such a declaration of the
“ mercies of GOD, as might encourage those
“ who are walking in his ways, and admo-
“ nish those who are not.” She was going
to tell her husband what was the wish she
desired to gratify ; but was interrupted by
perceiving the tide of grief suddenly rising
in his breast. They grasped each other’s
hand, and some minutes were spent by
them both, in the silent indulgence of
tears.

When this effusion had in some measure subsided, she began : " We have thought
" of this before ; and I trust we shall both
" be sustained in this last conflict. To you,
" indeed, the hardest part of the trial is allotted. You love me ; and therefore
" unworthy as I am of such a regard, you
" will feel a loss. I have, indeed, something here, for which I could think it
" worth while to live. It is you. It is
" my children. But there is One above,
" for whom I can willingly leave you all,
" dear as you are to me. I hope to be
" with him. Unworthy as I am of the least
" of his mercies, I trust I may warrantably
" rejoice in him, as the GOD of my salvation. I have endeavoured to know him.
" He has not suffered me to live in a state
" of indifference towards him. Grace has
" taught me what I am, and what I want.
" It has taught me to look for present peace

“ and everlasting happiness, in making the
“ mediation of a crucified Saviour the
“ ground of my trust, and his example the
“ pattern of my conduct : and that grace
“ encourages me to hope for the forgive-
“ ness of my sins, through his blood. In
“ this hope of salvation through him, and
“ the sense I have of my infinite obligations
“ to the GOD of all grace, I rejoice in the
“ prospect before me.

“ I have a confidence in you, that sets
“ me at ease with respect to the care neces-
“ sary to be taken of my dear children ;
“ but above all, I am enabled to leave them
“ with GOD. Thus, have I little to lose,
“ in comparision of what I have to gain, by
“ leaving this world : but you, my dear
“ Evander ! have yet to maintain the chris-
“ tian conflict. Be, however, of good cheer.
“ GOD is all-sufficient.

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“ You have often encouraged me in my
“ religious course; permit me to make my
“ last recompence to you in kind. God, I
“ know, will bless you. He will keep you
“ amidst the snares of life; direct you in
“ all the labours and difficulties of the fa-
“ mily; and support you in the last hour,
“ as he does me. Then shall we meet
“ again.—I do rejoice in this expectation.
“ I take delight in the thought, of seeing you
“ again.

“ I thank you for all your tenderness,
“ care, and kindness;—for all your admoni-
“ tions, reproofs, and counsels;—for all
“ the candour with which you have inter-
“ preted my failings. I am thankful for the
“ example you have been enabled to set me,
“ and for the care you have taken of my
“ soul. You have watched over me in this
“ respect; and I trust, that I shall have
“ reason, as a creature designed for a fu-

“ ture state, ever to bless God for bringing us together.”——She meant to say more, but her affections weakened the power of utterance; and she, withal, saw it was too much at present for Evander. He would have replied, but the occasion allowed him no command of himself. He would have prayed, and fell on his knees, by her bed-side; but stopping in the middle of the first sentence,—he wept, and retired.

Religion, while it cherished all the sensibilities which adorn the man, opened resources to Evander, no stranger to the views, faith, and dispositions, which form the christian. Reflection and prayer in his closet, restored to him the power of supporting another interview with Theodosia. He rejoiced with her, in the prospects of everlasting felicity. He thanked her, for having so well filled up her station in life; and,

kneeling down, he blessed the Father of mercies, for having vouchsafed to them that knowledge of himself, the influence of which had hitherto sweetened their society, and now relieved them both, under the pain of separation.

When he had risen from his knees, Theodosia expressed a desire, that all the family might be admitted into her chamber, when *Paternus*, their parish minister, should make his visit. "For," said she, "our family worship has been one of my greatest enjoyments. I should like to join once more with all my household in this act; and if I leave it to another day, it may not be practicable." Not long after, *Paternus* entered the room; to whom, after the customary enquiries were answered, the proposal of Theodosia was mentioned. *Paternus* was pleased with it.

In a little time, all were ready. Every domestic was admitted into the chamber. The servants were arranged at some distance from the bed, but in sight of Theodosia, who was raised by pillows, supported by two of her children. Paternus began by reading a portion of the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel; to which he added a few reflections, calculated to infuse into the minds of this little congregation, a desire to "die the death of the righteous." They were preparing to conclude with a prayer, when they were desired, by Theodosia, still to keep their seats. "Paternus," said she, addressing herself to the Minister, "will you permit me to interrupt you for a few moments, while I declare, in the hearing of my family, my faith in that Redeemer whom you have preached unto us." She was desired by Paternus to proceed.

"The testimony of a dying woman,"

continued she, “ ought to have some weight
 “ with those who hear it. I here then de-
 “ clare, that nothing supports me in the
 “ prospect of eternity, but faith in a
 “ crucified Saviour. On him alone, I de-
 “ pend for salvation. On the merits of my
 “ Redeemer, I ground all my hope of future
 “ happiness. And this I declare, in pre-
 “ sence of my husband, children, and ser-
 “ vants, that they may remember that what
 “ I professed through life, I rejoiced in, in
 “ death. Blessed Redeemer! accept my
 “ grateful acknowledgments of that love,
 “ which led thee to die for me; and fit me
 “ to enter that society of glorified saints,
 “ who to eternity, shall ascribe their salvation
 “ to him who loved them, and washed them
 “ from their sins in his own blood*! Lord,
 “ I wait for thy salvation!” Paternus then
 kneeled down and prayed; and thus con-

* Rev. i. 5.

cluded the last act of family devotion, in which Theodosia joined.

Paternus retired. The servants were preparing to withdraw; but were desired to stay. Theodosia thought, that an admonition from her, in present circumstances, might impress their minds, and be long remembered. She was unwilling that such an opportunity should be lost; but there was a native modesty in her, which always led her to make towards her point by delicate approaches. She chose therefore to cover her intention; which she did, by calling first one, and then another of her servants, to her bed-side, and making those kind enquiries about their health, which seemed to be occasioned merely by their being for some time invisible to her through her confinement. When she had thus gone round with her enquiries, she began to speak of her own

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case. She told them of her supports, of the goodness of GOD, and the blessedness of religion. She admonished them, in the most affectionate terms, not to neglect religion, nor to be inattentive to the instructions of Paternus, to whose zeal, humility, and benevolence, she bore witness. She encouraged them to seek the kingdom of GOD, by referring them to that composure which they now saw in her, who knew not whether she had a day to live. "Thus peaceful," said she, "will you be in the last hour, if you
" make it the main business of life to know
" and serve GOD. We may not all meet
" together again here: but be followers of
" Christ, and we shall meet around his
" throne in heaven."

To this tender address none of them were able to make any reply. With respectful and affectionate silence, some of them ap-

proached to kiss her hand. Others were obliged to quit the room immediately, in order to give vent to their feelings. And all gave proof of having heard her with the the deepest impression. Of the scene which followed, no description shall be attempted; it being impossible for me to represent it justly: this was her giving a parting charge to her children.

The anguish endured on this occasion was unquestionably great: yet let it be remembered, that although the survivors of Theodosia suffered much, in being obliged to separate from her, the supports of Christianity were felt. They knew, that there was a possibility of their meeting again; and they derived comfort from what they had been taught, namely, that a far more happy interview awaited them, if they followed her, "who through faith and patience" "inherited the promises."

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These are the felicities of married life, where Christian piety is combined with natural attachment. In such instances, we see something of Eden restored. How great and how lovely the contrast to the wretched family of an irreligious pair, is that, where the members live together in peace and love, delighting in God, and in the society of each other; worshipping his name, regarding his word, attending regularly to his ordinances, discharging their several duties, bearing each other's burdens;—and when death makes a separation, quitting each other in the hope of being reunited in a better world, never to know a parting there.

Such was the family of Evander and Theodosia. Like them, may you rule your house in the fear of God! and you will be “lovely” and pleasant in your lives, and in your

“deaths not divided *.” You have entered into a state designed by Him who instituted it, (among other things) for your happiness. It is admirably calculated to answer such an end; but if it be perverted, you derive no advantages from it; be it recollected, however, that the blame in this case falls not on the institution, but on yourselves.

I have suggested a number of rules, because the end proposed requires the observance of rules. It is in this state, as in others, happiness is the reward of diligence. “In all labour there is profit †,” said the wisest of men. Let what has been recommended to you, therefore, not only obtain your approbation, or merely excite a wish that it may have its intended effect: but

* 2 Sam. i. 23.

† Prov. xiv. 23.

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make a business of the duties to which you have been exhorted. It is now, that rules are to be adopted: now, before the evils which they are designed to prevent, have made their appearance. There is no difficulty in attending to them, now that your hearts are sincerely and warmly united. After a disgust taken, the rule may still seem good; but it may be felt to be impracticable.

Give yourselves to God, and to one another. Pray for grace to fulfil your mutual vows. Attend to the examples which the Holy Scriptures have assigned to each of you: and the more you study and apply them to the several occurrences of your lives, the more you will find, that they enjoin every thing which has been recommended in the former part of this Address, in order to preserve your first affections, and to cultivate goodness of temper. Thus, shall you be

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happy in yourselves, comforts to each other, patterns to your neighbours, and witnesses of of the excellency of that holy estate, in which the hands of the first human pair were joined by their benign Creator.

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